

the CALVIN orum

Peace On Earth
In the Atomic Age

Cradle of Bethlehem
Offensive Yet Glorious

The Japanese
First Impressions

Romans XIII: 1-8
Two Interpretations

Christian Doubt
Nature and Causes

The Voice
Perfect Tribute

Letters

Reviews

Verse

VOL. XI, NO. 5

**TWO DOLLARS
A YEAR**

DECEMBER, 1945

THE CALVIN FORUM

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The Christmas of the Atomic Bomb

An Editorial

AS ONE reflects on the prospect of the coming Christmas season, the thought forces itself upon us that it will not be an easy matter to celebrate Christmas in 1945.

This statement will at once be challenged by many.

Will not Christmas Day, 1945, spontaneously arouse within us the greatest outburst of the Christmas spirit?

Is not this the year in which peace has come to a world that seemed to be tottering upon the brink of ruin and destruction?

Have not the devilish designs of our totalitarian enemies been thwarted? Have we not witnessed the end of torture and cruelty inflicted for years upon human beings by their sadistic Nazi and Japanese tyrants? Have not the unspeakable concentration camps been closed? Have not the two nations which threatened all that is precious in freedom and democracy been humbled and stripped of military power? Have not we as a nation gained the greatest victory in all our history, a sweeping victory in the first real global war? And are not our boys returning home to resume the pursuits of peace?

All that is true.

And yet . . . despite these facts it will not be an easy matter to celebrate Christmas in the year of our Lord, 1945.

It will not be easy in the face of actual conditions in the world.

Though peace has come and hostilities have ceased, the thoughtful observer is not so certain the war is over.

Yes, you can take that statement in more than one sense.

In the actual and literal sense of the word the war is apparently not over in many parts of the world.

Is the eight year conflict over in China, or has it possibly only begun anew in the form of a civil war, tearing asunder and weakening the oldest and most populous nation, whose four hundred million or more constitute one-fifth of the world's population?

Is the war over in the Dutch East Indies?

What is stirring in Palestine and in the Near East in general?

And what are these ominous rumblings on both sides of the Dardanelles?

There is also a less obvious, but no less real, sense in which one may properly raise the question whether the war is over.

What mean these misunderstandings between Russia on the one hand and America and Britain on the other?

What about the oppression of the smaller nations of Eastern Europe at the hand of the Russian colossus?

And—perhaps most serious of all—what about the discovery and utilization for destructive purposes of atomic power?

It is not reassuring for the prospect of peace or the hopes of those who dream of a warless world to hear the scientists and the military men speak of the actual and the potential accomplishments of the atomic bomb. Says one of them: "In a fraction of a second on August 5, 1945, American scientists not only destroyed Hiroshima, Japan, but with it many human concepts—chief among them our ideas how to wage war. We are opening today a fresh page in military history and our first scribblings on it will be cramped and difficult, for what is to come far transcends all man's experience of what has gone before."

The atomic bomb has created terror in the heart of the very persons who can boast the magnificent achievement of having brought it into existence. In this world, already filled with phobias, a new and terrible phobia has made its appearance. Man's own toys have become the potential source of his annihilation. The highest achievement of scientists to date threatens to turn into a Frankenstein ruining his very existence.

At the thought of the terrible potentialities resident in this 1945 discovery of man, one Christian exclaims: It has set the whole world on edge and has ushered in a new era. Another: the danger of atomic war is too great and imminent to permit neglect of any means calculated to lessen or delay it. And still another summarizes it all in this pregnant sentence: Man is definitely headed for terrible things.

To celebrate Christmas 1945 with a merry heart will indeed not be an easy thing.

Perhaps this year of the atomic bomb with its potential terror and destruction may serve to bring home to millions of nominal Christians that the peace and joy which they associate with the Christmas season is not the genuine thing.

This "Merry Christmas" which millions of people are speaking of on December 25 and which they wish so glibly to their friends and dear ones on that day is a very superficial thing and has little or nothing to do with the Christ who has made Christmas real.

The atomic bomb has destroyed much more than two Japanese cities. Would to God that it might also serve to destroy this "Merry Christmas" without Christ which so many people are mistaking for the real thing.

As a matter of fact, there can be no "Merry Christmas" in the conventional, worldly sense of the term when at so short a notice and on so huge a scale and in so brief a moment and in such nihilistic fashion human life may be snuffed out as the recent *Life* story of the coming 36-hour war, based not upon Jules Verne but upon the official report of General Arnold, envisages.

In the face of such a contingency every merely humanistic "Merry Christmas" is blown to smithereens.

And precisely this sets off the real, the deeper, the genuine, the "Blessed" Christmas of him who is a Christian not merely in name but in very deed from this "Merry Christmas" of all the nominal Christians of our day.

The true Christmas is more than the Christmas of mere wreath and holly, more than the Christmas which only is Yuletide, more than the Christmas of the Yule log and the Christmas tree.

The true Christmas is the Christmas of Luke 2. It is the Christmas of the virgin birth. It is the Christmas of the incarnation of the Son of God.

This is the Christmas—not of the glorified, halo-surrounded innocent human babe, but the Christmas of Him whose name is Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

This is the Christmas of the manger, but not of the glorified manger which many people see on their greeting cards at "Yuletide." It is the Christmas of the manger of Bethlehem, the Bethlehem of

Joseph and Mary, the Bethlehem of the fulfilment of Micah's prophecy, the Bethlehem in which the true Bread from heaven descends from God to a spiritually famished and needy earth.

This is the Christmas which sees the manger in the same line of vision as the cross . . . and the empty tomb . . . and Mount Olivet. This is the Christmas that loses all its meaning when it is divorced from Good Friday . . . and Easter . . . and Ascension Day . . . and Pentecost—yes, and the Second Coming!

Only they can truly celebrate this Christmas and will wish to celebrate this Christmas who have found the Christ of Bethlehem at the cross of Calvary. Only they know the deep meaning of this Christmas who have recognized themselves as rebels by nature, rebels against God, sinners who need to be cleansed.

A "Blessed Christmas" like that does not glorify man or his generous propensities—it exalts the grace of God which stooped in love to give His Son as a ransom for those who could do nothing to redeem themselves.

This is the Christmas which yields a peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

And this is the peace which even the atomic bomb can not destroy.

This is the peace which our loved ones who died in the Lord enjoyed when they breathed their last in this terrible war, whether by machine gun bullet, bayonet, bomb, or plane crash.

This is the peace of which the most ghastly war cannot rob its possessor, and which all the cessation of hostilities cannot give to him who has it not.

With this peace in our soul we can celebrate Christmas even if our hearts should be bleeding for someone we loved—now sleeping beneath some white-painted cross in a far-off American cemetery.

With this peace in our soul we can celebrate Christmas despite the terror of the atomic bomb.

With this peace in our soul even Christmas 1945 can be beautiful and serene.

C. B.

HAD I BEEN YOU

Had I been you, sweet Mary,
I wonder what I'd have done
When first I felt my waiting arms
Enfold that heaven-sent Son.
I'd have pressed Him to my bosom,
And raised my heart above
In reverent, voiceless gratitude
And overwhelming love!

Had I been you, sweet Mary,
And seen the rapt acclaim
When shepherds knelt beside His bed,
And laden magi came;
I should have seen the holy light
Upon that face so fair,
And bowed in awed humility
To worship with them there!

—VERNA SMITH TEEUWISSEN

The Offensive Cradle

Henry Schultze
President Calvin College

PAUL informed the Corinthians that he preached "Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness." This same characterization of Jesus is found in the writing to the Romans where Jesus is described as the "stone of stumbling and the rock of offense." There is indeed something offensive about Jesus to all those that have not found salvation in him. Indeed, there is something basically offensive and humiliating about his appearance here on earth. There is no beauty in him and in all of his life. He was a despised and rejected man from the cradle to the cross. And no one can sing, "In the Cross of Christ I glory" until he has seen the shame, the pain, the rejection, and the ugliness of it all.

However, we seem to make one exception to the offensiveness of the life of Jesus and that is his birth. The cradle seems to be invariably beautiful and irresistibly attractive. But that can be true only when we fail to see the scriptural presentation of the cradle. The artists have made it beautiful, but God has not. And when we fail to catch the offense of the cradle, we have missed its import. What are some of its offensive elements?

The Objectionable Virgin Birth

One of the greatest stumbling blocks of the doctrine of the cradle is the Virgin Birth. How men have railed at it! They have attempted to rule out the infancy-reports as found in Matthew and Luke and have thereby called into question the trustworthiness of these two gospels. They have reinterpreted Isaiah and have taken the testimony, as it were, out of his mouth. They have laughed out of court the Pauline indications of the pre-existent Christ. And John too was dismissed as an unworthy witness. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth, so obviously taught that its teachers must be discredited in order to get rid of it, does not appeal to human intelligence. It is, as Paul States, just foolishness to man. What a man can't understand he rejects. What does not commend itself intellectually to a man he tends to reject. Some scholars have tried to account for the record of the Virgin Birth on the ground of pagan records, which present the gods coming down to earth and having marital relationships with the maidens of the earth. The offspring are then demigods. Some such a person it is assert-

ed Christ must have been if the infancy-stories are reliable. But the Bible story is quite distinct from that. There was no sensuous relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary. She remained a virgin through out it all. And there was no half-man and half-god born to Mary. He was very God and very man. However the offensiveness of the cradle in this matter reaches its highest and most bitter expression of rejection, when men like Soltau and others boldly declare that the person who teaches the Virgin Birth sins against the Holy Ghost. Let me quote Soltau's words, "Whoever makes the further demand that an evangelical Christian shall believe in the words 'Conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary,' wittingly constitutes himself a sharer in a sin against the Holy Spirit of the true Gospel as transmitted to us by the Apostles and their school of the Apostolic Age." These are bitter words hidden under the cloak of piety.

The intellectual offence of the cradle seems to be somewhat eased by the propositions of Huxley and Romanes. They represent the field of science. And Science is the infallible god of the age. Science itself has never claimed to be. But what science says goes. Fosdick once cast this peculiar slur upon those whose god is Science, "We have gotten so low down that we think that the greatest compliment that can be paid to God is to say that a few scientists still believe in Him." Well, some scientists have propounded the theory of parthenogenesis. They insist that there can be birth without the fertilization of the eggs. It seems to be true of certain forms of fungi and other forms of life. Huxley wrote that "virgin procreation and resuscitation from apparent death are ordinary phenomena for the naturalists." Romanes wrote, "Parthenogenesis, up to a certain point, is a fact in nature and has this value that it shows that Virgin Birth is inherently a possibility." These experts have been quoted by scholars with altogether too much enthusiasm. The moment that the Virgin Birth is reduced to the level of ordinary physical manifestations, it is lost. The value of the doctrine lies precisely in the fact that it is the greatest of all God's miracles. We should have some fear of science's approval of Virgin Birth. Any attempt to make out of it a comprehensible phenomenon—and you can not expect any more from science than that, is to rob it of its supernaturalism. And so the cradle remains objectionable because it refuses to yield to human understanding. But it is miraculous or it is not at all.

The Offensive Reduction of God to a Babe

The Kenosis theory as expressed by Paul in Philippians has also been exceedingly offensive. Most people see no more in the cradle than a very attractive child. He is a Chinese child when the people of China view him. He is a black child when the colored folks catch a vision of him. He is an Anglo-Saxon child when representatives of that race paint him. Indeed, one of the most interesting studies is that of the presentation of Christ by the artists of the various peoples. That is to say Jesus is presented as the ideal of childhood in each of the races. The trouble, of course, is that all these presentations are the fruits of man's ideals. But Christ is God's ideal.

The fact is that the person of Jesus represents the second person of the Trinity. He is a divine person. He, as it were, laid aside his being on an equality with God and assumed the form of a helpless babe, who was dependent upon the help of defective parents and had to flee his native country in order to escape the murderous hand of its ruler. There is something abhorrently tragic about the incarnation and about its necessity. No one wants his God reduced to such humiliating straits. It seems morally offensive that the great majestic and holy God should be thrust into this sinful world to eke out a miserable and humiliating life. However, this offensive something is necessary if the cradle is to avail us anything at all. One cannot help believing that the Wise Men from the East saw something beyond the form of a babe. The spirit of worship, prayer, and adoration indicate that they were enlightened by the Spirit so that they through faith could see the Son of God in the cradle. The angels too could not have missed the presence of God in the cradle. Their praise to the Child would have been idolatrous and blasphemous, if there were no God there. Men will bring appreciation and admiration to a cradle, but they cannot bring worship there unless they see God there.

The Humiliating Circumstances of the Birth

The cradle was not in a beautiful environment. The whole scene was aesthetically offensive. The atmosphere had not been purified from the malodors of a sheep's cove. The stall had not been cleansed of every particle of filth. The parents were not dressed in the finest of oriental robes. There was no visible halo above the child's head. All the beauty that is usually placed in an artist's presentation of the cradle are artistic accretions woven out of the fancy thread of human imagination. Isaiah presents it as it was. This was most humiliating. But it is always humiliating to atone for sins. Papini saw the vision clearly. Said he, "Jesus was born in a stable, a real stable, not the bright, airy portico

which Christian painters have created for the son of David, as if ashamed that their God should have lain down in poverty and dirt. And not the Christmas Eve Holy Stable either, made of plaster of Paris, with little candy-like statuettes, the Holy Stable, clean and prettily painted, with a nice tidy manger, an ecstatic Ass, a contrite Ox, and Angels fluttering their wreaths on the roof—this is not the stable where Jesus was born. A real stable is the house, the prison of animals who work for man. The poor, old stable of Christ's old, poor country is only four rough walls, a dirty pavement, and roof of beams and slate. It is dark and reeking. This is the real stable where Jesus was born. The filthiest place in the world was the first room of the only pure Man ever born of women.

"It was not by chance that Christ was born in a stable. What is the world but an immense stable where men produce filth and wallow in it. Do they not daily change the most beautiful, the purest and the most divine into excrement? . . . Upon this earthly pigsty, where no decorations or perfumes can hide the odor of filth, Jesus appeared one night, born of a stainless Virgin armed only with innocence." ("The stainless Virgin" indicates the religious affiliation of the author.) This is in general a true picture. But it is not a beautiful one. How offensive such a picture is! How men have painted it over with a veneer of beauty. It was offensive to their sense of aesthetics, and they proceeded to remove the offense and thereby to hide the truth.

The Rejected Implication

There is something startling about the cradle. He who stands before it and sees it as God would have him see it, must listen to words of judgment directed to him. The Child speaks and says as it were, "You are a sinner, a most horrible sinner. All this humiliation and shame which you see before you has been occasioned by your sin." There is something offensive about being told how sinful you are. But that is always the case as one stands before Jesus. It is no wonder that men have been moved to cry "Away with Him. Let him be crucified." It is said that there is a picture of Jesus in Milan. It is a priceless art treasure. A guard was listening to the comments of a would-be artist, who was criticizing the painting severely. Finally the guard informed the critic, "Sir, that painting is not on trial, but you are." Well, it is certainly true when one stands before Jesus. The Babe in the manger is not on trial, but every single person who stands before the cradle is. And the judgment is invariably tremendously disconcerting. It is this, "You are a desperate sinner." If the Child does not say that, the subject has not seen him aright.

It is always offensive to be told that you are a sinner, but never more so than when a Babe in a filthy

manger says so. Then we proceed to close its mouth and to present him as speechless. But if the voice is not heard, then we shall observe Christmas in vain. We shall not be able to reap the harvest of a proper observance of the day unless the indictment is pronounced upon us.

It is, of course, not the object of this brief article to teach that there is no beauty there. It represents the most beautiful scene in all the earth. But then you will have to look back of the offensive aspects to see it. As it is there, it is intellectually, morally, aesthetically and religiously offensive. But if you

have seen all that, and then still linger there, you will catch a vision of the love of God which is boundless.

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A Letter from Japan

Henry Zylstra
Kyoto, Japan

TWO weeks of a soldier-tourist's observations are not enough to justify me in supposing that I know Japan. I am already beginning to feel that the Japanese are complex, and that I shall have to do some studying before I can hope to capture their national character in a description. Nevertheless, I want to set down my first impressions.

I am still a soldier, of course, and really not a tourist at all. What astonishes me most, accordingly, is the completeness of the Japanese co-operation with the Americans, their full acquiescence in the spirit and their flawless compliance with the letter of the Potsdam Declaration and the instrument of surrender.

My guess is that if a poll were taken, it would show that the Yanks in Japan, almost without exception, are pleased with the Japanese and quite captivated by them. You will remember that in our training we were told that they were dirty and yellow and worse, and it was all as simple as that while we fought them from Port Moresby on up beyond the Philippines. Hence we are dazed and taken aback now—so out of touch with reality a soldier becomes—to find these people so interesting. They have values and ways of life which make us stop and consider.

* * *

The Japanese are making a deep impression upon us as a remarkable people. I know there are some in the States who were not fighting them in the Pacific and are not now here to assist in the occupation and establishment of control, who fear this swiftly favorable impression that is being made upon us and caution us to beware of the serpent under the flower. The ambassadors in Secretary Hull's office, they will recall, were ingratiating too.

Nonetheless I feel that after some years, when we have an historical sense, we shall all stop to re-

member how really remarkable all this was, this sudden end of the war in the Pacific, this fast and effective occupation. It is well to remember the simple large facts. Some think these mark the end of the war here as more dramatic than the end of the war in Europe.

The fact is that the Japanese chose to surrender. They had heard from President Truman what the alternatives were, unconditional surrender, yes, but at once with some integrity, or later with complete annihilation. They had been defeated, and decisively, but just as Germany had been defeated decisively with the Allied crossing of the Rhine. Not more so. These facts I have seen publicly announced and may therefore recount. The Japanese had more planes at the end than they had at the beginning of the war. All earmarked as they were for use in *kamikaze* attack, these could have inflicted untold loss upon Allied ships and men. And what was the figure General Mac Arthur announced lately as the total armed forces to capitulate? Seven million, I believe, seven million men under arms. This strength Japan had. It was not enough for victory: the strategy of Allied progress had been too effective for that. But it could have prolonged the war by many months.

Remember the armies in China and the by-passed thousands in New Britain, New Guinea, the Netherlands Indies, Formosa and the north, and think of the millions committed to the defense of the homeland. True, the defeat was decisive. The by-passed garrisons, the armies never contacted on the field, were useless for Japanese victory; the clean-cut and telling strategy of the combined Allied services was thoroughgoing, the case for Japan hopelessly lost.

Nevertheless this is to the credit of Japan, this proves her more human than Germany (human pity, you remember, was the note the Emperor sounded in his address to the people), that in the face of such defeat she chose to surrender. In this she was

reasonable, and reasonable she has remained. She lined up her tanks on the airfields, the easier for us to count them, and labelled and ticketed the planes with the dreadful *kamikaze* sign for our disposal. We came unopposed.

Can you imagine driving into Chicago at high noon without seeing a person on the street, except the police, their arms raised in salute? So we entered Kyoto. They handed us the key to the country on a lacquered plate, and gave it with a smile. I do not know what they were thinking as they did it. But that they did argues for an accomplishment. The reports come in: no deaths, no violence, no riots, no subversive activity, everything according to plan, hardly an incident to keep us alert.

* * *

Neither the word, civilization, nor its adjective, civilized, comprehends all that can be valuable in a people. But the Japanese are civilized. Japan is a civilization; it is full of human achievement as contrasted with natural wealth.

The rigid economy of this human thrift impressed me during the first afternoon of the coming up from Wakayama to Kyoto. The landscape itself hints at it, picturesque in its neatness, as though daily brushed by the hand-brooms so common in the homes. Slovenliness means waste, and there can be no waste in Japan, not so much as a dry leaf or a scrap of paper. Here in this office the charwoman craves the splinters from our rations boxes, and the janitors store the cigarette butts in their pockets with care. This country is densely populated, you know, and only one-fifth of it is arable. Hence the terraced mountain-sides, tier-like steppes from the river plains up to the peaks, each so much precious land snatched from nature. Not by an engineering project, this, but by hand through the centuries. There are waterwheels in the creeks to irrigate the rice, and in the bends of the fast streams there are stakes to prevent erosion of the banks. There are no fences, for fences take room, and no room can be spared from the growing. The villages have a single path; one is enough if you are willing to walk, and the Japanese must walk if they are to eat. Moreover, the towns themselves are set on the least tillable places, back against the bluffs or over the rocky terrain; and the houses are contiguous. You cannot easily overstate this, this rigor and sacrifice, this human inurement to need, this thrift of the people.

We in the States take it out on nature when we feel hemmed in or in want; we learned it from the frontier in a land of plenty; but the Japanese take it out of themselves, and sometimes have only virtue to show for their hunger. All this gives the "spiritual superiority" they proclaimed over Asia in opposition to "western materialism" a meaning we might do well to ponder.

Much in Japan as you see it for the first time seems to come straight out of your fourth reader. Such are the parasols, the kimonos, the kites, the scarecrows, the constant clop-clop of the cleated wooden sandals, the babies bobbing up and down in the hammocks slung from their mothers' backs, the shrines and temples set in hand-groomed gardens. There is, however, a certain greyness, monotony and uniformity in the scene, in the invariably tiled roofs, the uniformed students, the dun-colored slacks of the women on the streets.

This uniformity is evident everywhere. The people have been chastened into order and neatness by their natural situation, but I guess that much of the discipline has been imposed also by the saber-rattling police. The police bulk large in the public life; perhaps they have to, as they do also in crowded Europe, there being so many people in so little room. Be the cause what it will, you see the effect. On the safety lanes for the street cars there is no jostling or elbowing, no rushing past one another, no yelling or noise. The people form in lines in the order of their coming, and patiently wait them out. So in the department stores, those leaving remain on the left, even though no one is coming up and the whole stairs is free for the taking. It may be that the word for this is regimentation. Soldiers used to say that a "Jap" was good if he could carry out his own plan, but nonplussed if he had to adjust himself to a new element in the situation. I do not know how true this is.

I think this is true: the Japanese way of life is aesthetic and religious (that is, not secular as ours is). Here for the first time I feel more of the force of what Adams meant when he called ours a business civilization. The Japanese do not live for the making and the talking of money. They live for the living. And because they lack opportunity for new sensations they distill a lot of value from old ones. Daily actions become rites, and the habitual instead of becoming worn by time becomes ever more aesthetic. The tea ceremony is illustrative. The host carefully selects his materials, delicately whips the tea into a froth, and hands the bowl ceremoniously to the guests. The bowl is beautiful and requires daily admiring. When it is handed you, you hold it carefully, as a precious chalice. You take one sip, savor it, take two sips, three and a half. Then you examine the bowl, studying it, taking note of the artist who made it. You praise the host and bowl.

This is aesthetic living woven into the stuff of life and not affected as the last resort of the cynic. You see more of it. You see the art in the home, thrifty but fine. You have read of this, seen it in the prints. They do not waste values in Japan.

You go up street and down alley and wonder sometimes what the people eat, what they wear, and whether it is all for beauty and nothing for use. Precious porcelains, the baked colors of the lovely Satsuma ware, the silk kimonos with their gay-col-

ored obis, the lacquer, the cloisonné, the opal and sapphire, amethyst and jade, the Mikimoto cultured pearls, the tea chests and the cherry wood, the pretty fans, the colored prints in oil and water, all these you see, and even so you have not attended a festival, you have not gone to the shrine, nor visited the gardens, nor been at the Palace.

* * *

A captain told me last night that the Japanese habit of bowing was beginning to annoy him. The captain has been annoyed before and will be again. Bowing is as gentle a gesture as any and can be sincere. I wish you might have seen how gracious it was last evening when all the members of a family we called on bade us goodnight. So many people bowing not as a machine but as a symphony under the host's unspoken direction is pleasant to receive and to remember. There had been singing at the home ("Joy to the world, the Lord is come," they in Japanese and we in English) and the host said, "Christianity is peace," and the hostess said "Pray for us." This too in Japan, where the people were dirty, yellow . . .

I do not know what they are going to eat this winter. Surely what they raise in those buckets of earth and troughs of soil they set on the pavement beside the doors, and the vegetables planted in the firebreaks and in the lots laid waste by the bombs will not be enough. I believe Japan is the first coun-

try we are telling to get along on her own (it must be best so, but had France demonstrated so much of human durance so long?). The Japanese suggest they will get along. They will not whimper and they will not beg. Some will die.

These impressions are far from exhaustive. I have not mentioned the geisha girls. I have not told you of the stratified society, of those hopelessly caught in the lower strata who must sell their bodies or carry others in rickshaws at seventy. Beside the limousines of princes and tycoons, you see wretches draying the stuff of the wealthy on heavy carts.

There is no time now to write of the shrines, or the sweet smiles of the singularly obese gods of the East. The shrines are ugly, squat; there is no freedom in them. You see it at a glance. The god is false.

And ours is true. If only we could write that into the instrument of surrender, and have this flawless acquiescence, this perfect compliance, what a victory it would be. The Japanese, the books say, are not adaptable; they are imitative. They cut crazy capers in adjusting themselves to atomic energy, but they appreciate ethical achievement.

The song in that home and in their tongue was: "Joy to the World." Some have turned away from the pot-bellied gods of Buddha. The order has gone out that the Japanese may not look to the east, they must look to us now. I am uneasy, for the Japanese understand ethical achievement. Will they see His star in our West?

ANGEL CHOIRS

Angel choirs on high are singing,
To the Lord their praises bringing,

Yielding Him in royal beauty
Heart and voice in love and duty;

Waving wings the throne surrounding,
Timbrels, harps and bells resounding.

See their heavenly vestments glisten;
To their heavenly music listen;

Hear them, by the Godhead staying,
"Holy, holy, holy!" saying.

None that grieveth or complaineth
In that Heavenly land remaineth—

Holy love their minds disposeth,
Heavenly light to all discloseth.

Blessed Three in God united—
Seraphs worshipping delighted,

Sweet affection overflowing—
Cherubim their reverence showing.

Bowing low, their pinions folding—
God's majestic throne beholding.

What a fair and heavenly region!
What a bright and glorious legion!

* * * * *

Let me never be downhearted,
But just think how my departed,

With these angel-choirs are singing
To the Lord their praises bringing,

How I once shall be delighted,
With these choristers united.

—ALBERT PIERSMA

Romans XIII: An Historical Interpretation

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THERE is an interesting bit of history in connection with the first eight verses of Romans XIII which may serve to throw some light upon their meaning.

During most of our colonial period two entirely different interpretations of this passage prevailed in England and in America. The one interpretation was that given by the Episcopal Church in England and by the comparatively few Episcopal clergy in the American colonies. Oxford University was then so thoroughly an Episcopalian stronghold that Dissenters were barred from attendance. The candidates for the Episcopal clergy at Oxford were taught that it was one of the distinctive badges of the Church of England to teach the duty of absolute submission and obedience to the powers that be. Accordingly, once a year the clergy of this church were ordered to read to their congregations the so-called Oxford homily, which was a sermon or sermonette "against disobedience and wilful rebellion." Or, if they preferred, they could preach a sermon on a text of their own choice on the great sin of disobedience.

The occasion chosen for the delivery of this sermon was invariably the anniversary of the death of Charles I, who was then idealized as a royal martyr and a blessed saint. But when they spoke of the Puritans who had been instrumental in putting Charles to death, the tongues of these clergymen were "full of deadly poison." The Puritans were painted in the blackest of colors—they were rebels, traitors, regicides. In the eyes of the Episcopal clergy one could not be a dissenter without being guilty of disobedience not only to the King, but also to God.

In the American colonies too this practice was maintained. The bishop of London, who had the first and last word in all matters pertaining to the Anglican Church in the colonies, would instruct the Episcopal clergy to preach a sermon on the sin of wilful disobedience. The occasion here too was the anniversary of the death of Charles. And the favorite text for the occasion, in the colonies as well as in England, was Romans 13:1-8.

* *

In the colonies the Episcopalians were in the minority, the Dissenters everywhere in the majority. Here the latter did not have to attend the Epis-

copalian services and did not therefore have to listen to this particular sermon in person. But they knew too well that on anniversary Sunday they and their ancestors would be reviled from every Episcopalian pulpit in the land, not only as schismatics but as traitors. And on both charges their conscience was clear. In their own eyes they were neither schismatics nor traitors, but lovers of God and of country. Episcopalian doctrine could not be their doctrine, Episcopalian interpretation of Romans XIII could not be their interpretation. It was in fact gall and wormwood to them and stung them to counterattacks.

The Puritan clergy would therefore ransack their Bibles for texts which taught an opposite doctrine—the right of resistance and of revolution. They found a number of passages to their liking, which they would expound to their congregations on anniversary Sunday. And among the passages they chose, a favorite one was Romans XIII, to which they gave an entirely different meaning.

Sometimes the occasion for such a sermon would not be anniversary Sunday but the near approach of election day. On the Sunday before election day the clergy, especially in New England, would preach a so-called political sermon, to which our Puritan forefathers were less averse than we are today. Into this sermon they would skillfully weave the political philosophy of Milton, Sydney, Ludlow and others who in England had defended the beheading of Charles I. At times they would rely upon the arguments of John Locke, who was the defender of the Revolution of 1688, and would restate these doctrines more clearly and simply than Locke himself had done. Many of these political sermons were printed at public expense. A number are extant in pamphlet form. There is a convenient collection of these sermons in Wingate Thornton's *The Pulpit of the American Revolution*.

I have in mind one of these sermons delivered in 1750 by Jonathan Mayhew of the First Church in Boston. It is based on Romans XIII and represents throughout the dissenting viewpoint. I have repeatedly been struck with the cogency of his reasoning and (so far as I can judge) by the soundness of his interpretation. His general conclusion is that this passage *does not teach the duty of absolute submission and passive obedience* to the powers that be, and that whoever resisteth an arbitrary and tyr-

annical ruler, who abuses the God-given liberties of his people, does not resist the ordinance of God and does not receive to himself damnation. Resistance to tyranny is not on a par with resistance to God—rather it is doing God's will. He maintains that this passage not only authorizes but actually enjoins the duty of resistance for God's sake.

John Adams seems to have been particularly impressed with the boldness of Dr. Mayhew's sermon. Yet the doctrine it contained was not new in Dissenting pulpits. John Adams, Samuel Adams, James

Otis (intimate friend of Mayhew) and other revolutionary leaders in Massachusetts were to hear the same doctrine again and again in subsequent years. Because of this sermon of 1750, which has been called "the morning gun of the American Revolution," and others of similar import, Dr. Mayhew has been called "the father of civil and religious liberty in Massachusetts and America." And it has been rightly said that it is to the pulpit, and especially to the Puritan pulpit of New England, that we owe the moral force which won the American Revolution.

Scientific Interpretation: Its Increasing Scope

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IN ALL artistic interpretations, and in every one of the fine arts, the subjective element has a large scope and justifiably so, for the interpretation of the arts is understood to be predominantly subjective.

Not such, however, is the case with the scientific interpretation of the Scriptures, where we arrive at another type of requirements. In fact, an increasing scope of objective evidence, pro and contra, is available concerning positions taken and problems that arise in every department of theological or religious study.

In the light of such objective evidence, one should more and more make the necessary adjustments, for the final appraisal of one's work, by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ, the last judge at the last day, according to His own norms and standards.

One young graduate of a seminary shortly after he had been installed said, "Now I will have no more examinations." To this was answered: "There will be one more examination, for us all, at the judgment bar of God."

Our responsibility is individual and collective. Even nations have their responsibilities. And might does not make right. Denominations also have their responsibilities, whether for their creeds or for their deeds.

They are subject to the approval or disapproval of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who will be our judge in the last day. In this connection, there arises the question for the grounds of the hope that is in us. Are we testing those grounds by an increasingly exacting interpretation of the Word of God, or by our own vaunted pronouncements?

Human pronouncements were a common refuge of the false prophets in ancient Israel. The true

prophets brought as their message the Word of God, as it was given them by special revelation and infallible inspiration.

It is for us to increase as much as possible the scope of the objective evidence for our interpretation of the Word of God, in order that we may escape the pitfalls of subjectivism and increasingly adjust ourselves to the objective standards of God and His Word.

In the study of the Scriptures, one finds that there is an increasing scope of objective evidence that has been prepared by the Lord, and that should be adduced, more and more, in the interpretation of the Scriptures.

The scope of this evidence has been increasing through the centuries, but we wish to emphasize that it has been advancing even during recent times, is still progressing today, and must by the grace of God continue to advance in the future.

What then can be said to present an idea of the increasing scope of the objective evidence available in the interpretation of the Scriptures, in order that we may avail ourselves ever increasingly of this objective evidence?

The scope of the objective evidence may even continue to increase until the final judgment day of Jesus Christ, so that men will then be more than ever before without excuse for missing the true import of Scripture, or for trampling wilfully upon the requirements of the Lord.

To all students of the Scriptures, the Word of God is infinitely inexhaustible, because it reflects the mind of our infinite God, and there is accordingly no increase in the infinite, inexhaustible riches that are mirrored in the Word. These are objectively inexhaustible and infinite.

On the other hand, there is an increase possible in the scope of the objective evidence available for the interpretation of the Scriptures and for their defense.

This advancement is not only possible, but very actual, in fact. And we should appropriate this increase more and more.

Fundamental lines of the scope of this evidence are largely identical, from age to age, as a circle may be divided from its center, along certain lines. But as each radius of the circle is extended, the area is enlarged and the scope increased. So too the scope of the objective evidence available is advanced, though fundamental lines remain identical.

A very fundamental matter in all Biblical research involves our attitude toward Jesus Christ. According to the American Revised Version, our Lord has this to say of searching the Scriptures: "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me."—John 5:39.

Peter stresses that even the prophets searched the meaning of the revelations that the Lord had given unto them, concerning the salvation of souls,—“concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what (time)

or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven.”—I Peter 1:10-12.

After the witness of the brethren concerning the kingship (Acts 17:7) of Jesus Christ had produced such an effect that the enemies felt it threatened to turn “the world upside down,” at Thessalonica, the attitude of the Bereans toward the professed kingship (Acts 17:7) of Jesus Christ shows itself in a commendable form of Biblical research, for of them we read: “Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.”—Acts 17:11.

Paul, the great apostolic writer of the New Testament, continues to be interested in searching the Scriptures, when he requests “the books, especially the parchments.”—II Timothy 4:13. For him, Biblical research had a perennial interest, widening his scope of the knowledge and appreciation of the riches of God’s Word.

The Psychology of Doubt

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IN a previous article we introduced the subject of religious doubt. After a brief orientation of a psychological nature, we passed in review a number of outstanding instances of such doubt, both in the Old and in the New Testament. We now address ourselves to a consideration of the nature and the causes of doubt.

The Nature of Doubt

The first and most obvious characteristic of doubt is the fact that it is not a pose—it is actual. The Bible makes much of its reality. In the soul of Christ it was a very real phenomenon. Lives were changed by it. There is a tendency among many manifestly unwise counsellors to regard doubt as a somewhat unreal attitude which ought to be repressed. The fact of the matter is that it is very real. Christ reckoned with the fact of doubt as something real.

Nor is doubt necessarily sinful; it is rather human. Much in the universe is never fully intelligible. Doubt may be a note of health; it shows the soul fighting for life. Christ dealt very tenderly with a

Thomas, but He wasted no sympathy on the Pharisees. In fact, doubt seems to be part of the fabric of the human mind. Even Christ, the perfect Man, doubted, and we think none the less of Him for it. It makes the fact that He was “made in all things like unto us, sin excepted” more real. It is true that doubt often involves sin, because the created tension in our souls may be the result of wrong complexes and values striving for mastery in our life and thought, but doubt *per se* is not sin.

Strangely enough, every doubt worthy of the name goes back to the very ultimate of all truth and value. Every doubt involves one’s view of God. Eve doubted His veracity; Abraham His providence, protection, and promise; Jacob and Rebecca His dependability; Moses His constancy; Gideon and Joshua His orders; Elijah His efficacy *in re*. His workings in history; Job, Asaph and Habakkuk His righteousness. The young man doubts His reality, the old man His work. The prosperous question His necessity for them, the sufferer His wisdom and presence. No matter how varied the doubts may be, every one concerns God and His character. Possibly God waits too long, possibly He comes too soon, possibly He is too stern, possibly He is not stern enough,

but at all events every doubter comes face to face with God. The fundamental question that every doubter faces is, What do I think about God?

But the rewarding observation is that every doubt involves a certain faith in God. True it is not a perfect faith, because "perfect faith" casts out doubt, but faith there is. It is not the hardened unbeliever, nor the sneering sceptic; it is not the shrugging infidel nor the carefree indifferent, but it is he who loves the Lord Jesus who is harassed by doubts. The sceptic and the unbeliever have resolved the dilemma in their lives by denying one horn of it. Denying the dilemma, whether intellectually or practically, is not the doubter's attitude. It is precisely the believer who grapples with the fact of doubt and is determined to vanquish it. The fact that uncertainty is present implies that there is a quest and hope for ultimate certainty. Doubt is not blind unbelief nor is it certainty; it occupies a middle position. So I say: Doubt involves a certain faith in God.

By now it is quite apparent that every doubt involves some real or supposed contradiction. There is a tension in the soul, many times between morality and intellect. Possibly the paradox involves on the one hand what God has said about Himself, and on the other hand, what He actually does. Again the contradiction may involve on the one hand what we know to be God's will, and on the other hand, what we actually do. But at all events there are two things, two values, two truths, which constitute a contradiction. Abraham's tension existed between God's promise for protection, and a famine in the land. Or again, it was the irreconcilability of a coming child promised by God, and He an octogenarian. In Moses' life God's neglect of Israel in the past, and His promise of help in the future seemed inconsistent. Or even more simply, and probably more correctly, stated, God said: "Go," when Moses did not want to go. Elijah saw the fire from heaven come down to consume his offering, but the very same God permits queen Jezebel to hunt down His prophet in order to kill him. Job can not harmonize his own sufferings with God's righteousness.

But no two irreconcilable sets of ideas can remain peacefully side by side, especially when these two sets of ideas are as important to him as these are. The paradox must be solved. The doubter has a struggle in his soul. The seeming contradiction cries out for solution. Doubt will tear and rend a man, unless he solves the dilemma of doubt in some higher synthesis, or in a corrected misconception.

From the foregoing it appears that doubt is always a medial position. There is no possible stagnancy in the land of doubt. Action is demanded. There can be no such a thing as a perpetual doubt. For it is neither faith nor is it unbelief. And it must lead to the one or to the other. Either it will lead to a higher faith in God and His promises and a consequent purer life, or to disillusionment and bitterness

with an accompanying lowering of one's moral standards and conduct. Doubt is temporary, leading either to greater integration of personality or to its disintegration. It is in the position of the rolling coin; eventually it will fall on its side. One can not forever ride the brink; either one climbs to safety, or one falls into the abyss.

And what is the inevitable result? Doubt, if really met, involves a readjustment of values. Old truths are thrown into the furnace of doubt and have come out purified. They have gone through the mold of the individual mind, and become a living reality. Doubt stands at the crossroads of truth and life, and only by crossing the juncture can the two be truly synthesized. Old things are become new.

Origin and Causes of Doubt

Any adequate discussion of this subject must take into account the highly important problem of the origin, the causes of doubt. Why do men doubt? Surely it is not because men prefer to doubt. It is hardly a matter of choice. And if it is of necessity, what necessity is it that brings with it Demon Doubt?

A very common cause of doubt in the adolescent is the increase in knowledge. A young man goes to school, and there finds his traditions challenged. In the growth from childhood to maturity, he finds that the things which he took for granted were only thus attained after a long and hard struggle, and he finds himself undergoing this same struggle. He finds that there are some who deny the reality of the things he always thought most certain. The world is much larger, particularly the world of thought, than he had considered possible. And it takes time and struggle to assimilate these new ideas into the whole complex of his thought. He may find the objection of the infidel weighty; a cynical twist to some religious truth may unsettle him for a period. New facts must be assimilated in the light of old verities, and in the process the old verities are many times reshuffled, but should inevitably result in a purer and refined faith. Thomas, for example, had to assimilate the new idea of a resurrected Christ into his world of thinking.

But the disconcerting thing is that the new thing might be true and the old notions may be incorrect. Doubt is often caused by insufficient or incorrect knowledge. It was not so much a new thing that Thomas had to learn, but he had to unlearn his whole conception of the Messiahship of Christ. Christ had tried time and again to correct the false notions of His mission, and yet Thomas despondently said: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, how know we the way?"

Or again, it may be caused by a confusion of knowledge. Thomas did not understand the character of faith in the spiritual realm. He thought that faith implied uncertainty, and only knowledge at-

tained through the senses meant certainty. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails," said he, "and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." And note that Christ calls this demand for sensual certainty in spiritual realms "faithlessness." How often does not doubt arise from the very fact of perverted knowledge.

But often doubt has some deeper moral cause. One finds doubt to be the product of something deeper. A low, spiritual life will undoubtedly promote doubt. Elimelech is an excellent illustration. Coming from a fine godly home, as his name implies, he finds that increasing wealth slowly crowds out spirituality. And finally when a famine comes, he feels it incumbent upon him to leave Bethlehem, the "house of bread," and go to heathen Moab. It is a clear case of doubt in the providence of God. Here was a wealthy man living in the best part of Judah, who finds it impossible to trust God for food, and with his wife, Naomi, and his two sickly sons, Mahlon—the *invalid*, and Chilion—the *wasting, pining one*, goes to a heathen land. Their departure was a virtual denial of Elimelech's name (*God is king*). Whether this low spiritual life is propelled by laxness, by increase in wealth, or by an overly-busy week day life the result is the same. It will finally rear its ugly head in some disquieting doubt.

More particularly, doubt may be aroused by an irregularity in spiritual exercises. A constant prayerful life is poor soil for doubts. Many times the causes for doubt may be traced to a disregard for God's Word, or irregular church attendance. These are means of grace Divinely instituted and are ordained for a healthy, normal, well-integrated life. Their disuse, or their perverted use, has an opposite effect. Moses doubted the constancy of God, whereas he himself had been inconstant. He had had the temerity to attempt a return to Egypt with his son as yet uncircumcized. The boldness with which he dared to answer God at the holy mount hardly shows an intimate prayer life on his part. The contentment engendered in the peaceful pastures of Midian had given rise to a complacency altogether dangerous for a man of God. His separation from the people of God was also doubtlessly a contributing factor.

More often, I presume, doubt can be traced to some moral lapse, some serious offense which the offender refuses to part with or confess. Cain first killed his brother, then asks: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Saul falls into sin, then the thick cloud of doubt envelops his soul, and he consults the witch in the grotto at Endor, and finally commits suicide. Pilate first condemns Jesus, then asks: "What is truth?" Truly the "blood on our hands turns black—within the mind." There is the gnawing tension between MY life and the IDEAL life, which always creates mental friction and uneasiness. The one or the other must go. Abraham doubts Divine protection for his life and that of his wife while in Egypt, but notice that his presence in Egypt itself was a

disregard of Divine providence. Time and again, one finds that it is some hidden sin or propensity, many times a sexual problem, which underlies most spiritual doubt. And if the sin is dealt with, the problem inevitably vanishes. The "I love Thee, Lord, with all my heart, but I'd rather not give up liquor" attitude is the breeding ground for festering doubt.

Solitude may result in doubt. It was said of Anthony of Koma, the founder of monasticism, that the walls of his Egyptian cave would reverberate with his moanings. He would be tormented by terrible doubts and fears. He was plagued by continual torments. And why? Because he was alone. Man created in the image of a social God, is also social. He demands companionship. And the abnormal state of solitude creates an abnormal attitude of mind. "It is not good for man to live alone," God once said, and it is still true. If Moses had not spent so much time with his sheep and more with his family, he might not have been so vociferous in the gaudy display of his doubt.

One factor that must always be reckoned with is the temperament of the doubter. There are certain temperaments which lend themselves more easily to doubt. Particularly such temperaments as the introvert, the melancholy, the pessimistic or the critical. The individual who is fond of self-examination will also be more susceptible to tension in the soul. A Thomas would be more inclined to doubt than a Peter, though Peter also had his doubts. It was the sly and cunning Jacob who doubted rather than Esau.

It is strange that failings in our fellow-Christians is a productive and fertile field for doubt. An individual is enthusiastic for church reform, but he finds that others are not as enthusiastic as he is. In fact, sin in others often awakens doubt in the weak Christian. Paul warns against indulging in meats if it should cause some weaker brother to stumble. Or possibly it is merely the failings of others which are a stumbling block. The individual worships in a local congregation, and sees an elder whom he suspects of shady dealing during the past week, or a gossipy president of the Ladies' Aid, or his competitor in business who has been far from brotherly in his competition. Or he sees a workman who overcharged him for some minor repair job, and he finds it difficult to reconcile all this with their Christian profession. The continual tension between the actual and the ideal in others may well be a cause for doubt.

It is true that every age has its own peculiar doubts, but it seems that this present sceptical age is particularly adept. Everyone and everything wears the thin veneer of so-called personality. To be modern, one must adopt some pose. It matters little what the pose is, as long as one hides the true self. But the Christian must puncture the coat. And he finds beneath the cynicism a life of wistful star-

chasing. He finds beneath the impersonalizing machine age, men and women with despairs and joys, with fears and aspirations, everyone throbbing with life. But society has caused social rifts. He sees the devitalization process of twentieth century civilization going on and on, men and women impersonalized for the sake of money. And all these dislocations in the common every day life are productive of doubt, whether that be individual or social.

And whether that age has made its imprint on every individual Christian or not, the fact remains, it has produced much want and suffering and misery in the life of men and women. And suffering has always been a great cause for doubt. Many times life does not seem good at all. In moments of intense and endured pain, in times of illness when someone loved nears death, in times of hunger or even extreme and sustained fatigue, doubts often arise. When one kneels at the bed of a suffering loved one, and prays more earnestly than he has ever prayed before for the life of that loved one, but God was not dissuaded, and the loved one died, one is given to doubt. When a telegram comes from the War Department—"We regret to inform you . . ." it is hard to reconcile this with a loving Father in heaven. There seem to be contradictions between our experience and what we know concerning God.

When forever from our sight
Pass the stars . . . the day . . . the night,
Lord of angels, on our eyes
Let eternal morning rise,
And shadows end.

But there are also times when the nearness of that very "eternal morning" awakens the complacent soul, and sends it reeling into the struggles of doubt. To know that I am a sinner, and that death is inevitable makes the question of personal security a tremendously earnest one. On the one hand the individual sees the black Scylla of his sin, and on the other the yawning Charybdis of retribution. Oh, he knows the answers glibly, but now they are fraught with new meaning. How about me? Am I to be numbered among those from whose eyes the shadows end when the eternal morning rises? It is small wonder that permanent abnormality sometimes results, when the tension in the soul finds no release in the higher synthesis of personal assurance. But if the conflict is finally resolved, the tried faith will emerge purified and ennobled by the strife.

Conclusion

We have said much about doubt, and we are now ready to define it. Even at this stage a scientific definition which would include all the elements would be impossible. But this much can be said, that doubt is a disintegration of the personality brought on by conflicting values warring for mastery in the individual. There is a conflict which demands a solution. In other words, doubt is the suspension or tension of the soul caused by two seemingly irreconcilable magnitudes, with the individual

subjectively compelled to adhere to both sets of ideas, or ideational complexes. This fact of doubt may be social or individual, but in either event it is tragically real.

That is the one thing which this survey compels one to adopt. To minimize it, or to disregard it, would be a major tragedy. It is one of the most serious and heart-searching of a Christian minister's problems. Every Christian must face the tremendous fact of doubt in his/her life, but facing it honestly and prayerfully will emerge a nobler Christian.

Christmas Tribute

WE LOOK at John, a rough-looking hair-coated man, gaunt and brown like a statue rough-hewn from wilderness rocks, blasted and seared by wind and sand, as he stood by the river, speaking to a group of followers and anon performing the strange rite which had earned him the nick-name "The Baptist."

To see him is not to expect pretty speeches. Nor did he offer any. His voice rolled like the wilderness gale. His words scorched like the hot desert sand. His glowing eyes seemed to dissolve every wall of subterfuge, however high or well-camouflaged.

And yet, he spoke a sweet and gentle word, a gentle, indirect intimation, that may well stand as the perfect tribute to Jesus, his Nazareth cousin.

The tribute is not to be found in anything he actually said directly about Jesus. It is not the tribute of, "Behold the Lamb of God," nor of "He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for He was before me." We do not refer to, "He is greater than I, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose," nor yet to that gentle disavowal, "I should be baptized of thee." Each of these is rich in its own setting, but does not shine as does the jewel of perfect tribute.

That was given when John was speaking not about Him but about himself.

The Scribes asked him, "Who art thou?"

He might have said in all truth, "I am John, the son of Zacharias, lineal descendant of Aaron, truer aspirant to the highpriesthood than any in the iniquitous house of Annas." But he did not say that.

He might have said, what was plain to all, "I am the first true ascetic since the days of the ancient prophets." But he did not say that.

He might have said, as did Jesus later, "I am Elijah that was to come." But he even refused to say that when he was asked it.

He might have said, as the common people were saying everywhere, "I am a true man of God, more so than any of the Scribes." But neither did he say that.

John the Baptist said, "I am a voice, crying in the wilderness."

When he said that, this is what he really said:
 "The prophecy of Isaiah is even now being fulfilled. Through the wilderness, through a valley of dry bones, the King of Kings is about to ride in glorious victorious cavalcade of power. For His coming the mountains will be cut down and the valleys shall be filled and a highway shall be laid upon an earth whose crookedness is made straight and whose rough places are made a plain.

"Along that highway the nations are gathered, waiting for His coming. Their number, thousands upon thousands, embank the highway and overflow it, like a boisterous stream, so that the highway cannot be seen.

"Threading along down the highway, through the crowding multitudes, a lone figure approaches. No one can see him in the crowd, but he cries out a message. He is the crier, the herald, only a voice, crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!"

"I am that Voice, that is all."

That is the tribute implied in those words of John. Implicit in it lies an ascription of glory to Jesus that goes beyond any other more direct tribute—glory that only eternity will fully reveal.

As Christmas comes again, many a tribute will be paid and repeated which are truly tributes to Him Who is and was and is to come. But the greatest tribute of all is not in saying but in *being*, "A voice, crying in the wilderness"—a privilege akin to that of the "Herald angels!" —ALA BANDON

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From Our Correspondents

NETHERLANDS LETTER

Dordrecht
 October 20, 1945.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

THE rays of the late autumn sun light up my unheated room. But we are accustomed to living without fuel. Last winter, that severe winter when the Germans were still here, I carried on my studies wearing a heavy winter coat and heavy woolen gloves in a room with the temperature below zero [Centigrade, no doubt—EDITOR]. In fact, at that time I had to place a request in our church bulletin for a piece of candle which some kind parishioner might be able to furnish so that their minister might have light for his study. You see, when, as at present, we only lack fuel and nothing else, we feel we are highly privileged.

Yes, that last winter! I wish you could have seen us then. To make the warmest possible sermon in the greatest possible cold—that was almost a *contradictio in terminis* (aut in adjecto). By this time, however, we are being revived. Gradually we rise again. Culture also comes back to life. Education was practically at a standstill. The boys were kept busy collecting paper, scaring up some foodstuffs, finding some milk, and all that could only be found at a distance. In the cities there was simply nothing to be had. The paper they collected served as fuel for cooking. Old scraps of paper from factories, etc., etc. I could tell you endless tales about those war years with their suffering and want. In this way the closing of the schools occasioned by the bombing danger, by the bitter cold, and by the disappearance of the teachers, served a good purpose. In this way also the three children at our disposal could do their part to aid in maintaining the bare level of existence!

Today, however, we witness a new beginning, also in education and culture. The Free University has filled a magnificent role in the days of occupation. Both faculty members and students did wonderfully, with the exception of one, whose case is still being investigated. Barring this one case, not one has been suspected of collaboration and weakness. One of the remarkable things is that of all the resistance group the great majority were of the Reformed Faith. When the list of those who have given their life for the cause is drawn up, it will

again be clear how high the percentage of the Reformed was.

I say this not in any boastful spirit, but only to prove the practical power there is in the conviction of the Calvinist. When God and His Word hold the place of honor in our thinking and living, then we are ready, if need be, to make sacrifices, even the sacrifice of our own life. The recent war has again demonstrated this. Humanism with its starting point, its focus, and its goal in man, can never furnish the power needed in such a crisis. And so, if I may be permitted a word of kindly advice, I would urge you by all means to strengthen the foundations of Calvinism among you. Also with a view to the national life of your great American people it will prove a leaven and a salt, which in the hour of crisis that is certainly coming upon the nations (also upon the United States) will prove itself of much greater value for human life than could ever be anticipated.

Today the Free University celebrates the 65th anniversary of its existence. Throughout the years this institution has exerted a far-reaching influence upon the whole of our national life. How clearly this has come to light during the recent crisis. Even the Germans were fully aware from which source the most violent resistance came. That is the reason they have been so persistent in persecuting and terrorizing the Free University. Its libraries and laboratories they have plundered and ruined as much as they could. But what of it! We will rebuild. Help is proffered from many sources. Also our American friends evidence this spirit of helpfulness.

You ask how the buildings of the Theological School at Kampen have fared? With my own eyes I have seen how the Nazi soldiers converted the beautiful auditorium and the courtyard into a pigpen. Yes, they were expert in fattening beasts for the slaughter and to devour them. Even if others round about them starved to death, they would gorge down their abundance of food before the eyes of all. Yes, this home of theologians became the redenzvous of swine. I had almost said: prodigals and swine belong together! Would that these Nazis might truly repent of their unbelievable crimes and barbarities.

The Kampen Seminary has begun to recover and has reopened its doors. But, alas! now we witness a greater damage than even four-footed mammals could have caused. A spiritual

damage has been inflicted by the Schilder schism. Going the limit Schilder has started a school of his own, where he, together with the aged Dr. Greydanus, now claims to be "professor of the Reformed Churches", whereas the fact of the matter is that these churches have just deposed him because of his persistent refusal to submit to the church's judicatories and to abide by their decisions. The elderly Greydanus joined him because he has always been close to Schilder, and this he did despite the fact that heretofore he had never raised any objection against the decisions of the Synod of 1905, and had in fact lent strong defense to the Synod's position on covenant and baptism, as any one of you can judge for yourself by reading his well-known commentaries. This brother is a riddle to many and they cherish the hope that some day he will honestly confess that he made a mistake. We pray God that we may soon witness a greater degree of the spirit of reconciliation than is evident at present on the part of the schismatics.

At present these schismatic leaders are going up and down the land with whatever arguments to aggravate the breach they have caused and which they call by the beautiful name of "Reformation". In fact, they went right on to appoint three new professors at their so-called "Hoogeschool der Gereformeerde Kerken". Three faithful ministerial followers of Schilder received this distinction: Holwerda, Veenhof, and Deddens. You can readily understand that this move does not serve to promote a possible attempt to effect a reconciliation at the forthcoming Synod of 1946. It is also clear that the schismatics do not desire any such reconciliation, unless the Synod should nullify all its previous decisions in the matter.

There is also great national disturbance. The East Indies are in ferment. Many in the Indies suffered death at the hands of the Japanese. Word has just come that among these was also one of my sisters, who was doing a fine piece of work as head nurse in our mission hospital. Another sister of mine suffered the loss of her husband, who was engaged in teaching on the same mission field. Many families here are receiving similar sad tidings. We had been in hopes that our English allies might have succeeded in occupying Java sooner, so that much of this misery might have been avoided. But no doubt this was not an easy matter for them. We as a nation had sacrificed all in the struggle and thought we were entitled to more ready help and support when once the fall of Japan came. How regrettable that the American forces, known for their ready and prompt action, were not on hand!

And now, my friends, I must close. Holland is liberated, but we feel like a patient who has recovered from a serious disease and is taking his first fresh air walk. However, we are deeply grateful to God for so much recovery. Greetings to all. Till our next chat.

P. PRINS.

CONDITIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Hq. Det., 590th Ordnance Bn.,
APO 777, c/o P. M., New York, N.Y.
October 17, 1945.

Dear Dr. Bouma:

MY wife sent me some old CALVIN FORUMS in a box of books, and I enjoyed rereading them. Material worth reading is at a premium here. Especially did I appreciate the editorial, "United We Stand," in the April, 1942, issue. Time has shown how correct you were in your analysis then. There are, however, a number of factors influencing the people here, and apparently at home, which I fear are dangerous. I have written about them to different people at different times, but apparently they have not understood. My position is such that I cannot say all that I want to and can only hint at things that I would like to state specifically. But I feel that some of these things are of such importance that a few of us can afford to face the disgrace of being disciplined if something can be done about it. I fear that we are very rapidly losing the peace and I know no one better fitted to judge the present situation and to arouse interest in it among our people than your-

self. So I beg your indulgence for a few minutes while I tell my little tales.

The English and We

I do not know if the recent replacements we received from the United States reflect the general attitude or not but fear that they may. The idea seems to be that England did not do her share. They think that because we overran the larger area that therefore we did a disproportionate amount of the fighting. It is true that we did more than the English, but we are also the larger people. Actually the size of the territory liberated is no indication at all of the fighting done. The Germans concentrated in the north for perfectly sound strategic reasons. The English and Canadians met extremely heavy resistance constantly. Our papers carried the story but many people seem to think that was only to make us kindly disposed to the slow progress of our allies. I have been in their territory often and am certain that the explanation is correct. Our own ninth army never covered very much territory while the seventh spread over a tremendous area. Yet the ninth was a large and excellent army and fought exceedingly well. The difference was simply that of location. The Germans were concentrated in the north. I think the casualties sustained by the English speaks for itself. They did their full share of the fighting and more than their share of sacrificial living during the war.

We have found, also, that they are trustworthy. Not all people here are. But you can depend on an Englishman. I am convinced that the appeasement policy of earlier days never met with the approval of the majority of the people, and the imperialism we so often condemn finds hearty disapproval among the masses. Churchill's defeat was no surprise to us who were stationed in England. It is partly the consequence of a general swing to the left but almost as much, I believe, of a general reaction against the whole imperial idea. However, I found a general fear of what America under certain leaders following certain policies might do to England, and consequently England isn't going to relinquish her advantages unless she can be certain we will not take advantage of her. That seems reasonable to me. But whatever commitments she makes, England, or, rather, the English people, stand prepared to do all possible to fulfill these commitments.

For us who have had close dealings with the English it was pleasant to discover that while they were "close" business men, no doubt because of necessity, they were extremely kind. I received better treatment only in Holland and that for obvious reasons. We were all treated with more kindness and hospitality in England than we ever were in America. I visited in English territory often and received better treatment from their line and service units and their military police than from my own or than they could expect from us.

All of that you know, but I simply wanted to add the observations of one who has spent nearly two years now in working with them. The English are convinced that their future is dependent upon active cooperation with the United States. Our people do not seem to realize that the same is true for us. Without England we never could have made a successful invasion of the continent. And for the future she is still our first line of defense, the only truly democratic nation upon whom we can depend at all, unless we include those too small to be of much help in a crisis. Friendly and active cooperative relations with England seem to me to be imperative if we are to preserve the peace of the world. We can do together what neither can do alone.

Our Relations with Russia

The second danger I see is our relations with Russia. I don't believe I need to burden you with instances. A recent issue of *Reader's Digest* carried an excellent article on "Eight Things To Do With Russia." I do not have it at hand just now. There have been other such reports. The central idea is that we have worked the old "Sphere of Influence" once again excluding Russia from some of our decisions and conferences. Russia has reciprocated in kind. Now, while she insists in having a share in the control policies of our territories she refuses to admit us into hers. I have lived on the border of her territory now

for six weeks and been to Vienna twice and must report that the worst reports are not exaggerated. This may seem to be to our advantage. Everywhere one hears expressions of confidence in us, fear of them. Our military leaders who have suddenly turned governors, a task for which they are ill fitted through no fault of their own, seem to think that it is better to have the people suffer under Russian occupation and to lose property and rights to them. But there is another view, the long view, which no doubt Russia is taking. It is the policy of Totalitarian States to bring people to such a strait that they will accept any kind of deliverance. Yesterday's *Stars and Stripes* carried the story of Russia's refusal to help stabilize currency here or permit us to do it. The result will be disastrous, but the purpose seems to be apparent. Without our Lend-Lease, our Air Armada, and the threat of and then the actual invasion of Europe, Russia could never have won the war. We have a moral right to make certain demands upon her—more, I feel it is our duty. But we have not always treated her in good faith, so we can expect nothing different than what we got from her. Whether it is too late to do something about our situation I do not know. I do know we should have had a definite policy long ago. If the policy is that of definite "Spheres of Influence" then I can see only expansion of those spheres till we come into conflict again, and in that game Russia has the advantage of position, and race, for half of Europe and a great deal of Asia will become hers. She can be a great and good friend, but she would be a terrible foe. I would like very much to speak with you about this and get your judgment if and when I get back.

Our Occupational Policy

The third danger I see is in our occupational policy. Here I am on dangerous ground and can say but little. The difficulty seems to be that we had no definite policy. I am no friend of Patton's. Yet much criticism was unjust. He thought, and I feel correctly, that for a very large percentage of Germans firm, just, and efficient treatment of social and economic problems would solve the problem of what to do with the Nazi. Fanatics they are, but the fanatics would have little opportunity if we exercised judgment in our dealings with these people. But we often work at cross purposes with ourselves and the people say: "Wrong as Hitler was, he at least got things done." They do not say those things openly, but they have been said to me after they learned to know me, and I have been hard pressed to answer that except to say that he got them done at a terrible cost to humanity. I have yet to see a definite policy for occupation forces. Units as low as Infantry Regiments have written up their own. When the regiment is replaced it means the initiation of a new policy to the hopeless confusion of business, production, and social life.

Worst of all, we are doing a number of the things we condemned in the Germans. Forced migration of people is a terrible thing, especially when done without warning. I have seen families who have lived and worked here for decades and whom the Austrians tell me were never Nazi nor trouble makers be told to move out without baggage in half an hour and not return. Unofficially we are told the Austrians want to confiscate their personal property, and therefore do not want to give them warning so they can sell it. Even if that is not so you realize that they can realize nothing on most of their property when all know they must go. I understand the reactions of these people. It was so in France and Belgium and Holland. Those who suffered made their own friends and relatives suffer often for reasons only imaginary. In Holland, for instance, a young woman has been imprisoned now for two months because she worked in Germany as a secretary. So far they have not been able to find any evidence of unpatriotic conduct so have not brought her to trial, but in the meantime she remains imprisoned on the word of one neighbor. I know about this case because I got the woman and her friends fed and housed when we first entered Germany. The Germans tried to kill them on occasion. Later I arranged for their transportation back to Holland, and I visited them there. But, while we can under-

stand the feelings of these people, it hardly excuses us in helping them carry out wrong conduct.

Yesterday a young woman who lived here all her life, married an Austrian killed in the war, working as a director of personnel in a large factory here in a position in which the factory directors say she is irreplaceable, went to our military government installation to see if she might not be permitted to spend the winter here before going back to the Germany she doesn't even know. The officer there said, "Yes, come and see me at my quarters tonight." Because we are operating the plant she came to see us and one of our officers finally got the whole story from her. She refused to pay the price asked and her future status is now indefinite. There are many such instances where the woman is asked to pay a price for her release from prison or for her job. Hardly good American procedure, I think, and yet we can do absolutely nothing about it. As long as exportation without warning is going to be the policy unscrupulous men can take advantage of the people in their desperate straits.

The day before we tried to do something for a young girl who was actually born here. She lost all her relatives in the war and nearly lost her mind. An Austrian woman of really great ability nursed her back to health. Then the Russians came to live in her house and a lieutenant under the influence of drink tried to rape the girl. She escaped, badly bruised, and the Austrian had to hide her for several weeks in a room. Again she came very near losing her mind, but kindness restored her. Today this woman wants to adopt her as her own child and has taken steps to do so but the order came that the girl must go to Germany. What will happen to her there no one knows, of course, but one can imagine some dire things.

These are just two cases which indicate a problem. Deportation may be necessary. I fear it is. But it cannot be effected in a month, and certainly not at this time of the year. Somehow we have not determined carefully enough what should be done, or else we have failed in properly instructing the army how to carry out its task. I have spoken to many Austrians and few want democracy, and even fewer want to be divorced from Germany. They can stand without Germany only if they have a definite Balkan league or friendly relations with the Balkan States and preferential trade arrangements. The things these people have done to each other seem to make that impossible. Hatred for Slavs and Magyars is intense here, and the economic and cultural ties to Germany strong. We cannot afford to overlook those facts. Austria is not yet Eastern European, but we may make her so. But those are problems to be solved by the experts. Our policies, however, involve principles, and there I feel, Christian citizens should make themselves heard.

I hope I have not bored you with this. I feel rather deeply that we are sowing seeds for war and I do fear the consequences. My judgments may be warped, and I may be too near the scene of action for a proper perspective. I hope that is so.

I have no hope of coming home soon, though I have had only three weeks' work in five months, and have more than sufficient points for discharge. I would enjoy these months if I had troops of my own to serve, but with nothing to do I am growing very, very tired of Europe.

Trusting that you and yours are well, and that the work at the seminary is being blessed, I ask for your continued useful service in His Kingdom.

Sincerely yours,

RAYMOND R. VAN HEUKELOM.

CAMPUS-IN-THE-WOODS, IVCF

ONE of the most significant advances in college evangelism of the year came to a highly successful conclusion on August 28. On that day Campus-in-the-Woods, the new Inter-Varsity summer training school at Fairview Island, 140 miles north of Toronto in the Lake of Bays, concluded its first annual session. Eighty-five Christian student leaders who attended the session are now on their way home for a brief

vacation before returning to their thirty-five campuses throughout the United States and Canada where they will use the knowledge and inspiration gained this summer to help evangelize their campuses.

Campuses represented were Asbury College, Adelphi (New York), University of Alberta, University of British Columbia, Bryn Mawr College, University of California, Carleton, Chicago Teachers, Duluth State Teachers, Central Michigan College, Duke University, Dubuque University, University of Indiana, University of Illinois, Juniata College, Hamline University, Macalester College, Mars Hill, Maryville College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Maryland, McGill University, MacMaster University, Michigan State, University of Minnesota, University of Michigan, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Oregon State, University of Pennsylvania, Purdue University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, San Diego State, Temple, Stanford, University of Toronto, Toronto General Hospital (School for Nurses), Vassar, Wayne University, Wellesley, Wheaton College, Wilson College, Washington College, Washington State University.

An outstanding feature of the curriculum of Campus-in-the-Woods was the fifty-minute "quiet time" before breakfast each morning, in which all Christians participated in personal prayer and Bible study. As a result of this plan, many students discovered how to use such periods more efficiently and laid plans to consistently carry on the practice during the coming school year.

Speakers for the summer session included Dr. Cornelius Van Til from Westminster Theological Seminary who taught the course in Christian Apologetics; Mr. J. F. Strombeck, Moline, Illinois, manufacturer and author, who taught the course "Grace Disciplining Us." Dr. Northcote Deck, for twenty years a missionary in the Solomon Islands and director of the Solomon Islands Mission, presented to the students the possibility and means of a closer walk with God during the coming year; Dr. Wilbur M. Smith, Instructor in English Bible at the Moody Bible Institute, led the studies in Bible doctrine, while the Rev. E. Simmonds, pastor of the Church of the Messiah at Toronto, presented effective methods in Bible Study. "Christian Living in Today's World" was the course given by Dr. Clarence Bouma, Professor of Apologetics at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and editor of THE CALVIN FORUM.

The purpose of this summer training school is to equip students with a victorious apologetic to meet the constant attack upon their faith in the university classroom and to give them an intellectual foundation strong enough to support them as they move against the ungodly current.

Student leaders expect that the Christian testimony on campuses throughout the United States and Canada will be stronger than ever this fall as a result of the Inter-Varsity summer school. Meanwhile, plans for next year's even larger program at Campus-in-the-Woods are being pushed.

KENNETH TAYLOR.

ANN ARBOR LETTER

October 9, 1945.

218 N. Division,
Ann Arbor, Mich.,

Dear Fellow Calvinists:

JUST as soon as your correspondent has finished typing his news letter he must pack his valise to attend the meeting of the Christian University Association of America. Whether Philadelphia is the indicated place for such a University and whether the present venture will yield the answer to our prayers at this point of the Kingdom cause need not be discussed here. But one thing is certain, dead sure—we need a University in which the Christian *Weltanschauung* can thrive! And it is equally much beyond dispute that Michigan is not such a University.

The Calvinistic system and the man for whom it was named is seldom mentioned in our class rooms except, as they did at Absalom's burial place, to cast another stone upon the un-

sightly pile that marked the spot where a bad and foolish man was stopped. For some he, John Calvin, came eating and drinking and was therefore a wine-bibber and a friend of publicans and sinners; for the man across the hall he came neither eating and drinking and was therefore possessed of the devil. Servetus he slew because the wretch had maintained that Palestine was a dry and arid country, thus blaspheming the Holy Ghost who says that the Holy Land flowed with milk and honey. Such nonsense is disbursed not by some teaching fellow, but by men without whose approval one cannot get a degree. It is true that at a Calvinistic University John Calvin and his system might receive an ultra friendly handling; but one could err in that direction quite palpably without taking half the liberties that many a professor takes in the opposite direction. Yes, we need a Christian University, if for no other reason than to keep the record straight!

Libraries too have personality: they reflect, and therefore recommend, a life and world view. Just yesterday I was looking in Michigan's lavishly adequate library for H. Shelton Smith's excellent study on "Faith and Nurture". I couldn't find it. But Harrison S. Elliott's "Can Religious Education be Christian?", the book that caused "Faith and Nurture" to be written and to which it is an adequate reply, fairly glowered at me from the shelves. I looked for Hendrik Kraemer's profound though conservative "The Christian Message in the Non-Christian World," written for the Madras Conference. It was not listed. Was this because Michigan doesn't go in for divinity? No, for "Re-thinking Missions", the conclusions of which Kraemer has hamstrung, is also "theological"—and it is on the shelves, at least when some undergraduate is not using it; for the book gives evidence of having been handled. Dr. Oswald T. Allis' book on the problem of the Pentateuch is a volume of University calibre, as no one can deny, but it too is not entered in the files. Perhaps this is because nobody on this campus bothers himself about Higher Criticism and its theories? Michigan doesn't have any divinity. But don't fool yourself: shades of Jules Wellhausen! One hears his name in lectures where it would hardly be anticipated. An ardent professor can do wonders in the way of eisegesis. And Wellhausenism, as far as these lectures are concerned, is hale and hearty. One would never guess that it has received wounds from which it can hardly recover, so that "it is no longer held by our younger scholars except with revolutionary reservations", as Dr. Noortzij has declared.

Yes, we need a Christian University! And if men counter that such an institution is likely to follow a certain bias, we knowingly put our tongue in our cheek, and recall the quaint old Dutch wit: *De pot verwijt de ketel dat-ie zwart ziet?* (The kettle accuses the skillet that it has a dirty face.)

The Christian University which we are to build must not be another Bible School. For in spite of the considerable good that the latter institution may be doing it does not have the right technique in this world of the twentieth century; for it would resort to non-exposure rather than to timely immunization. Non-exposure to modern unbelief might yield a tolerable state of good health in Pumpkin Center through which only one road goes; but it is inadequate elsewhere. We need timely immunization; a technique where the virus of the to-be-avoided disease is used in well-controlled conditions, with the result that the patient is rendered safe in the climate into which he is to go—this twentieth century world!

LEONARD VERDUIN.

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THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Dr. Clarence Bouma,
THE CALVIN FORUM,
Grand Rapids, Mich.

October 11, 1945.
Lynden, Washington,

Dear Dr. Bouma:

IT IS with pleasure that I accept your invitation to serve as correspondent for the Pacific Northwest. Often this country with its material wealth and its awe-inspiring natural beauty is referred to as "God's country." But that does not mean that all of the people here are such as love God. In fact, according to some very recent figures the State of Washington has the lowest percentage of church membership of any state, and only 27 per cent of our children receive religious education.

In the face of these conditions the Washington Council of Churches has outlined a program of action and is seeking the enactment of a law that will allow the children released time from their usual school program for a period not to exceed two hours per week to receive religious education. Such weekday classes are being held in two centers of the State, namely Tacoma and Spokane, and the immediate program calls for the training of youth leaders and teachers and the expansion of weekday church schools. This is hailed as the hope of the Protestant churches of the State, and these schools are instrumental, so we are told, in helping boys and girls "to get the basic training upon which our democracy is built". Therefore it is evident that they who promote such religious education are not interested in bringing the child face to face with Jesus as Lord and Saviour. In fact, it is questionable whether these schools should even bear the name "religious," for a committee including representatives from the public schools, educators at large, business and professional people, and character building agencies, as well as church representatives is to be appointed as a Weekday Church School Board. It may seem unkind to criticize such efforts which in themselves may be noble, but there is no other way open. For when the Christian church is satisfied to call a bit of moral training and character education Christian training, it is more than time to point out that such a program is not Christian, nor is it able to meet the challenge of the hour. First of all, such weekday religious training must needs be Christian in the historic sense of the word. Then, too, unless home and church and school see eye to eye and work hand in hand in the training of the child, such a weekday program accomplishes little or nothing. I believe that there is no substitute for the Christian day school.

Here in the northwest county of the State of Washington such Christian education is on the march, and that not without opposition. Once more we see that there can be and is a ruthless intolerance on the part of the world against those who favor such education for their children. To-day it is manifested in name-calling and defamation, but many would so much enjoy if they could really do something to stop or destroy the movement for real Christian education. Here in Lynden there is a Christian school with an enrollment of 430 children; the Ebenezer school a few miles away has 75 pupils, and the newly opened school in the neighboring town of Sumas has 105 pupils. At present these schools are involved in a lawsuit arising from the double interpretation given to a law enacted by the last State legislature. The law reads, "All children attending school in accordance with the laws of compulsory attendance in the State of Washington shall be entitled to use the transportation facilities provided by the school district in which they reside." However, the county school superintendent and the directors of the local school boards have refused to transport the children attending the Christian schools because they declare that then public funds are being used for private and parochial institutions of learning. In one of the eastern counties of the state the county school superintendent has declared that private and parochial school children will be transported in public school buses as authorized in the 1945 law, and this superintendent, who as a state legislator assisted in drafting the law, declares that the law is specific and provides that no child attending school according to the compulsory attendance law is to be refused transportation. It seems that the courts

will be called upon to declare whether the children attending private and parochial schools have the right to be transported by the public school buses and whether the recent law is constitutional. Because of the refusal of the public school directors to carry the children of our Christian Schools the schools have been forced to transport their own children and transportation by our own buses is furnished our children. Although the financial burden is thus increased, the cause of Christian Instruction is forging ahead and our Christian people are willing and ready to go forward in this cause of the Lord.

Cordially yours,

J. F. SCHUERMANN.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FRONT

My Dear Dr. Bouma:

I HASTEN to drop you a few lines. Pardon my negligence. Dr. Clarence Macartney in the October issue of the *Pulpit Digest* says that the most popular sin is Ingratitude. He mentions Filial Ingratitude, Ingratitude to Friend and Benefactors, and Ingratitude to God. How true this is! We take the many kindnesses and helps that others give us as though we are entitled to them, and forget even to thank them for it. This makes me think of the help CALVIN FORUM has been to me. Even before I was a subscriber, the other fellow paid for it and I had the pleasure of feasting on your valued editorials and feature articles . . . You see . . . there was no charge, gentlemen! What I wanted to say is that I have enjoyed your Magazine like no other, and I want to thank you for your illuminating, and searching editorials. May the first decade be only one of many to come! And I pray that God bless you and your associates in this most needed Kingdom work! More power to you!

Secular Education

There are those who need hell and damnation preaching. They need to be "pulled out of the fire" so to speak. That is precisely what secular education needs. The writer has tried to crash through secular education for the past twenty-five years, but to no avail. Educators looked at me, and thought I was crazy. John Erskine called it "Crazy Education" and asked the question: "Will the school train character?" and then continues: "The school will probably do no such thing. Not the average school. You as parent will neither ask or expect such result. You will count yourself lucky if your children come out not much weaker morally than when they went. And so long as you, whose family bears the loss, are not worried about it, don't flatter yourself that the institution will do very much worrying. When morality is not taught from the home up, the educational system becomes first an expensive folly, then an organized racket."

But Americans paid no attention to these cries from the wilderness. It took Paul Mallon, Washington columnist, to give America the shock of its life. He stripped progressive education stark naked, and left parents, teachers, columnists, editors and politicians stand gasping for breath! Calling it progressive paganism, he writes: "Man yearns to have in education the belief in God, and the acceptance of Christian ethics. We must accept Christian principles and apply them to our enlightened knowledge." Ministers and Christian school teachers are missing something if they fail to obtain a copy of this book by Paul Mallon . . . *The Ease Era* (Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.)

The editor of the *Evangelical Christian* writes in the September issue under the theme of "Poisoning the Wells" . . . "It is a terrible crime in the East and one punishable by death to poison the wells at which men and animals come to slake their thirst. . . . But what is one to say of men who are poisoning the wells of spiritual truth at which people come to drink the water of life . . . In the text books prepared for Grades V and VI all that the young people can receive is the most distorted idea of the Bible, and the general impression

that its statements, particularly of the Old Testament, are not to be trusted, and that the miracles were fairy tales. There is no suggestion that God is the same yesterday, today and forever, or that His judgments are according to righteousness and truth." After making his protest to the Department of Education for the Province of Ontario, he concludes: "It is hardly to be expected that our protest will avail much to check those who are poisoning the wells of spiritual truth, and setting the feet of our children on the same way that Germany trod to her final doom." No, it will not avail anything. The battle promise in Genesis 3 is becoming more and more visible, and the anti-Christ forces are openly taking on the battle of the ages.

Fifty years ago, if a man openly took a stand against God and Christianity, he was not welcome in society, but today these Atheists, No-Godmen, sit in high places and openly deny the truths of the Bible. We find them in educational institutions, both elementary and higher.

Arthur G. Cromwell, of Rochester, New York, won the first test case in the State of New York, and religious education in public schools in several Rochester area towns has been forbidden by George D. Stoddard, commissioner of education of New York State. Describing religion as a "chronic disease" of the imagination contracted in childhood and as a "detriment to intellectual development", Cromwell maintained that such instruction on school property was "a flagrant violation of Section 4 of Article XI of the State Constitution," which he says prohibits "the teaching of religion in any form within the confines of the school building." The spectators in a Chicago court gasped when this "No-God man" said: "We deny the existence of God." In reply to this Atheist's statement that religion is a "chronic disease", Tom M. Olson remarks: "If a 'disease' can aid in attaining the highest aspirations of the human soul, atheists and rationalists should desire to see it reach epidemic stages!"

"Who cries 'Tolerance' louder than atheistis when their blatant infidelity is exposed? But what a glaring manifestation of intolerance we have here!" Those who claim that we may teach religion in our Public Schools, please take notice! Better get behind the Christian School movement!

Christian Education

It is refreshing to note in the midst of the Babel of Confusion found in this paganistic education, that all is not darkness, that there is a gold lining that never fades, and that the Cross still towers o'er the wrecks of time. The general secretary of the Union of Christian Schools is worthy of our sincere thanks in stepping into this Christless education to hold up "The Lamp for our feet, and the Light upon our path."

In the October 1 issue of *United Evangelical Action*, the official magazine of the N.A.E., Mr. Mark Fakkema states emphatically that the only hope for America is to have Christian Schools. He calls the readers' attention to the fact that "The founders of our country linked religion with the schools. Said they in the famous Ordinance of 1787, 'Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged.'" He reminds us of the revolutionary changes which have been taking place, and that we in our day have dethroned God in the field of education, and by so doing are on the way to what Dr. A. A. Hodge prophesied in his day that the result would finally be atheism. Then he quotes C. C. Morrison, editor of the *Christian Century*, who recently stated: "Public education without religion creates a secular mentality faster than the Church can Christianize it. Our society is unquestionably moving toward secularism which is only another term for Atheism."

Mr. Fakkema then presents his program as follows: "The school program which we have in mind for Christian America is a God-centered educational program from the kindergarten up. This calls for a separate school system which parallels the secular public school system.

"Christian couples establish Christian homes in which Christian children are born. Consistent with this, Christian parents should establish Christian schools in which these children are reared. Shall we Christians establish homes in which Christ is the unseen Guest and then send our children to schools in which unbelievers, agnostics, and atheists feel at home?" Congratulations, Brother, more power to you!

In this same issue of the N. A. E. paper, George W. Robnett discusses the two bills that are before the House of Representatives asking for "Federal Aid to Education." He raises a warning note as to what we may expect if these two bills for Federal Aid should be passed by the Senate, and calls the Christians' attention to their duty that they should write their representatives and senators in Washington and express their disapproval. We are afraid that this warning will not be heeded. So many are stream-lining the superstructure that they forget that the waves and billows of "Federal control" will finally destroy the very foundation of our Democratic way of life. "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

National Convention

The National Convention of the Union of Christian Schools was held in the Christian Reformed Church, and the Timothy Christian School, Cicero, Illinois, on August 21 and 22. Rev. G. Hoeksema delivered the opening address. His topic was: "Trend Toward State Socialism". We are informed that the speaker delivered an excellent and scholarly address. We were not present, but we know him personally as a man who knows where he is going, and that he stands on solid ground. Rev. F. M. Huizenga read a paper on "Re-evaluation of Christian School Institutions." There was a panel discussion on educational reconstruction. Rev. H. Bel, Principal R. Tolsma, and Rev. J. Vander Ploeg took part in this discussion. The secretary of the Pension Fund, A. Blystra, reported excellent success, and to the present time \$32,000 has been subscribed. Mr. Fakkema reports a rapid growth in interest in Christian education in churches outside of the Christian Reformed denomination.

The most hopeful and encouraging news in the field of Christian education is the promotional work which has been accomplished by the Board of the Union for Christian Schools. The "everlastingly-at-it" secretary, Mr. Mark Fakkema, making his Eastern itinerary, presented the cause of Christian education to churches of six denominations (Baptist, Congregationalist, Interdenominational, Mennonites, Reformed, and Christian Reformed). I quote the following from an address prepared by the General Secretary:

"The attitude from outside groups toward the Christian school has undergone nothing short of a revolution during the past twenty-five years.

"We all know that when the Union was organized, the Christian school was pretty well confined to one denomination. The American world knew little or nothing of the parent-society Christian school movement. Today contacts with the outside are numerous and the interest in the Christian school is nothing short of phenomenal. Here are a few examples to prove this statement.

"From the books of the Union it is evident that in one given year more Christian school literature was purchased (not given away) by the so-called outside than by our own Christian school constituencies. Such interest was unheard of a quarter of a century ago.

"Four months ago a program of speaking engagements was arranged for us (not by us) to address seven different denominations on a speaking tour of four weeks. At one of the smaller meetings held we were informed that seven denominations were represented. Such a manifestation of interest in Christian education was unthinkable twenty-five years ago. (The secretary informs us that letters are coming in at the Union office from various parts of the country).

"The above are but illustrations showing that the door is wide open for Christian school promotion in our country. It is wide open for an organization like the Union of Christian Schools which is neither Church nor State controlled.

"From the vantage point of the Union office we must say that we have hardly scratched the surface of Christian school promotion work in our country. The opportunities seem unlimited. The interest from the so-called outsiders is as encouraging as it is startling. Will we as a school movement be equal to our opportunities?"

The General Secretary's question is a serious, a most important one! It must be answered! This poor man cried out that question in Chicago twenty-five years ago, but it was like standing at the tomb of Washington—no answer, cold and chilly! But he had a vision of things to come and has been busy these past years trying to awaken the conscience of Christian Americans from Long Island, New York, through the Shenandoah Valley and across the Mississippi, and today is continuing! He has not had very much success, nevertheless his vision appears about to become a reality. Thanks to the Board of the Union of Christian Schools and the tireless brother Fakkema! God bless you men and may you see much fruit upon your labors!

We need men with a vision! God give us men like that! Men like the editor and his associates of THE CALVIN FORUM, the Union Board, and Mr. Fakkema. Yes, God give us more men like that, and then we will arise and the "school movement will be equal to our opportunities." We will build and build and build for the Kingdom of God, and leave for our children and children's children a completed system of education crowned with a Calvinistic University located where "the Calvin spark which once we caught shall never die again," is today preparing the men of vision for tomorrow!

Sometimes I have another vision—a vision of man's eternal possibilities . . . it must be a very dim one compared with the reality. I see a being of wondrous beauty standing beside his Master and looking like Him. He has a kindly bearing and from his eye there flashes the fire of an immortal genius. There is a crown upon his brow, a scepter in his hand, and he is sharing lordship in the universe with the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask, who is that wonderful being? An angel answers, "That is man, man redeemed, glorified, and made like unto his Master."

Cordially yours,

LOUIS J. BOLT.

Rochester, N. Y.

THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

SEVERAL matters of interest crowd for place in this report on the activities of the Reformed Church in America. The first we mention is the retirement of Dr. W. D. Brown as Secretary of the Board of Education. His entire ministry spanned forty-two years, the last twenty-five of which were given to the Board of Education as its general secretary. When he came to this position the Board was a minor among the boards of the denomination with less than \$20,000 income a year. The total annual gifts at present amount to \$140,000.

Dr. Brown's successor is Dr. Bernard J. Mulder, for the past eight years the editor of the *Church Herald*, denominational weekly. During the past eight years Dr. Mulder served not only as editor but also as business manager. He increased the subscriptions from 6,000 to 30,000. His slogan was "The Church Paper in Every Christian Home." More than 160 churches in the denomination are on the 100% list which means that every family in the congregation receives the *Church Herald*. His pastorates in Michigan, in the college town of Pella, Iowa, his membership in our College and Seminary boards, and his membership on many committees of denominational importance make him specially qualified for the task now awaiting him. He was installed in this office on October 2 by Judge Walter Bliss at the regular Board of Education meeting.

The new editor of the *Church Herald* is Rev. L. Benes, Jr. For the last few years he has prepared the Sunday School page for the paper. He has served on the committee of management during his pastorate in Grand Rapids. His fields of service in New York, Michigan, and California give him a denomina-

tional viewpoint which qualifies his ready pen for this important task.

Dr. M. J. Hoffman, Professor of Church History at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, has just returned from the Netherlands. He was sent to represent the denomination by the Emergency Fund in order to discover the urgent needs of the Netherlands. He was cordially received in their homes, their church gatherings, and by audiences when he preached at their worship services.

Dr. Luman J. Shafer, Secretary for Japan and China of the Board of Foreign Missions, left for Japan on October 20. He traveled by air as one of the four-man civilian team to visit Japan and to study the needs of the Christians in that country. This trip carries the endorsement of President Truman and General Mac Arthur. They plan to be gone about three weeks.

Negotiations have been opened with the United Presbyterian church of North America to explore the possibilities of union. Both denominations have appointed committees. At the first meeting the Reformed Church was represented by Revs. L. J. Shafer, M. Stephen James, John A. Dykstra, L. J. Kuyper, John W. Beardslee, J. R. Sizoo, R. Vanden Berg, R. Beckering, A. L. Warnhuis, R. Meengs, A. Van Westenburg, T. P. Haig, and J. E. Hoffman. The purpose, power and problems of union were discussed. It will be of interest to the readers of THE CALVIN FORUM to learn the reasons listed in favor of union. Here are the reasons: (1) A stronger conservative evangelical church, (2) Wider missionary horizons, (3) A further demonstration to the world of the church's essential love and unity and our participation in it, (4) An enlarged congenial denominational atmosphere, (5) A new physical and spiritual vitality, (6) A larger place in the nation's life, (7) A tendency to smaller loss in church families due to a wider distribution of churches, (8) Increased national appeal, (9) Sales will be large enough to justify denominational literature, (10) Increased administrative efficiency, and (11) A tendency to break down parochial lines. Committees were appointed to study doctrinal standards, education, a survey of relations of churches at home and abroad, polity and practice, and legal procedures.

The Particular Synod of Chicago, R.C.A., has launched a new radio program which features gospel preaching and gospel music. The Messengers of Love Trio furnish the music and the undersigned is scheduled for a 10-week series of messages. Rev. H. Teusink is serving as the efficient chairman of the Radio Committee. The program is called "Temple Time", and is carried over 10 stations of the ABC network.

WILLIAM GOULOZE.

Holland, Michigan.

CALVINISTIC ACTION COMMITTEE

THE "Calvinistic Action Committee" is a new name for an outgrowth or an expansion of the work of the American Calvinistic Conference Committee.

The purpose of the Calvinistic Action Committee is succinctly stated in the report of a special committee submitted to the Calvinistic Conference Committee at its meeting November 1, 1945. The following proposals of this special committee were adopted:

- "1. To promote and sponsor where- and whenever possible conferences at which the tenets of Calvinism as world and life view shall be expounded and applied;
- "2. To promote and effect the production, translation, publication, and distribution of approved literature, especially if the publication of such literature could otherwise not be effectively carried out;
- "3. To utilize any and every other available means and agencies to spread and inculcate the doctrines and world and life view of Calvinism."

This purpose is obviously more comprehensive than the one objective of the American Calvinistic Conference Committee, the promotion of conferences. The proposed expansion mentioned

above necessitated a change of name, and the most suitable name for this purpose is "Calvinistic Action Committee". This name carries with it basically two duties: We must know, we must act.

Our New Duties

The following observations may clarify possible confusions.

We intend to promote conferences in the future as we have done in the past. The Calvinistic Action Committee will continue its standing committee on Regional Conferences. (Dr. C. Bouma and Dr. H. H. Meeter constitute this committee.) The war is over, transportation has improved, so we can expect plans for conferences in the near future.

Regarding the second point, "the production . . . of approved literature" this committee feels that it is pioneering in a new activity. What a field! No one can blueprint the future, but what possibilities if God's beneficent providence smiles upon us. The point we wish to make at this time is that this committee will not go into competition with any publication house. We feel that we are debtors to the world to see to it that there is Calvinistic literature. Some literature which may be of supreme importance and should be in the hands of key men and women could not be printed unless sponsored by some organization. The Calvinistic Action Committee may direct the creation of new literature. Through its contacts with Calvinists of the world, Hungary, France, and Netherlands, it may be instrumental in translating the choice productions of these countries.

This committee does not intend to sponsor the publication of books that have the proper channels for printing and distribution. It no doubt will encourage a wide distribution of anything worthwhile. It will, however, shy away from the actual printing of literature since such work is the domain of our existing publishing houses.

Another important observation is that although we are limiting ourselves for the time being to two objectives, promotion of conferences and the publication of literature, we are not binding ourselves to this limited program. We trust that the providence of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit will direct our ways. We can envisage new objectives. At the proper time we hope to mention some in these columns.

What Success?

Such a committee as the Calvinistic Action Committee merits the love, prayers, and support of God's people. The success of such an organization depends upon the loyalty of God's people to the truth and upon the sincerity of our double profession: Christ must reign, and I must love my neighbor as I love myself.

Ours is not only the task to know but also to do. Minorities, and we are one of them, armed with truth in love, fervent in prayer, bold in convictions will speak even though the trend today be toward the regimentation of the soul of man after communistic and monopolistic patterns. Truth in the smallest soul still dulls the finest tempered steel of the sword of the most powerful enemy.

We do not believe for a moment that Calvinism will ever be obliterated from the world. If God will not allow His sovereignty to be mocked we Calvinists have nothing to fear. Fear does not prompt us first of all. The only fear we should cherish is the fear of personal responsibility for negligence. We may not be guilty of the sin of omission in today's crisis. What prompts us is the sense of duty cheerfully done.

We also believe that if the sparks of such action fly into the hearts of God's people, these sparks will set hearts aflame.

JACOB T. HOOGSTRA.

Book Reviews

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

THE EASE ERA. By Paul Mallon. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 119 pages. \$1.50.

I was on the last day of 1943 that Paul Mallon, a widely read newspaper columnist, ventured to write an article against the prevailing conception of education in America. The result was an avalanche of approvals from a host of Americans who had been dubious about the trend of education with its alarming trail of juvenile delinquency, but who did not dare to voice their objections to the trend because it was backed by outstanding men and women in the field of education and politics.

But Mallon struck the right note. Christian teachers throughout the world had already been fighting this battle. How they welcomed a man who could write and fight, and who had millions of readers welcoming his column day after day. The axe was laid at the root of the tree of Progressive Education which is based on a thoroughgoing evolutionistic principle. It would let nature have its course. Discipline was severely criticized. Restrictions were said to be dangerous. The children were naturally good. That was the philosophy of the Progressive educator. I would be the last to maintain that this sort of education has not done some good, but its over-all effect was bad. It developed a generation of rebellious individualists.

Many of the articles in this book, if not all of them, appeared from time to time in newspapers. They were entirely worthy of being gathered together and presented in book form. It is hoped by the present writer that these articles may enjoy the wide reading they deserve and that they may be used to open the eyes of those who have been blind adherents of a disintegrating form of education.

H. S.

THREE NOVELS

WHEN GLORY DEPARTS. By Dorothy E. Stromberg. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 295 pages. \$2.50.

A LEATHERNECK LOOKS AT LIFE. By Cornelius Vanderbreggen, Jr. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 232 pages. \$1.25.

THE WHITE TOWER. By James Ramsey Ullman. J. B. Lippincott Co., New York. 479 pages.

DURING a recent period of convalescence from an attack of "flu," it was my privilege to read the above indicated novels. What a contrast they present! The first two are Christian novels. The last one is not.

When Glory Departs introduces us into the home of Rev. Thorne-ton. He is a busy preacher. His home is kept by an old maid sister. Two young ladies, who were adopted when they were children, also were members of the family. The minister was a devout man, but he insisted that everything and everybody's happiness must yield to the primacy of the Kingdom as he interpreted it. And the Kingdom was his particular work. He almost wrecked the home of his older daughter by insisting that she devote her time in his office. He grows suspicious about the other daughter, Sue, who is the heroine of the story. She suffers tremendously because of the bigotry of the old minister, but carries on loyally. After several interested parties tried to get the Reverend to see his sin, he apologizes and Sue goes forth with her young husband to prepare for mission work in Spain.

A Leatherneck Looks At Life is a work in which one travels along with the author as he begins his travels from America to the Netherlands. This is an interesting combination of auto-

biography, history, travel and fiction. When we are in the Netherlands, we become acquainted with a delightful little land, with all its quaint customs, delicate beauty, and fine hospitality. A great deal of Dutch history unfolds before us. The author returns to America across the Eurasian continent up into the Aleutians. Back in Seattle, the spiritual problems that have been following him all the way around come to a climax when the author meets a certain Mr. Petersen. The author becomes a marine and relates in his usual easy and racy style the experiences that he had been having with his superior officer. The story closes with the note of joyful devotion to his Lord.

The White Tower is a story of an attempt to climb a Swiss mountain. There is a party of six. An Englishman who walks loose-jointedly manifests the practical mindedness of the British by deciding to let the rest go on with his job. A Frenchman, typically characterized, loses himself in drink and he, too, is left behind somewhere on the mountainside. An American doughboy whistles his way well-nigh to the mountaintop and he is the one, of course, that is guilty of a moral indiscretion. The young Austrian grass widow, Carla, is so splendidly pictured that one is inclined to overlook her immorality. There is a young German there too: capable, systematic, strong and independent. He is the one that will win for Germany. Near the top he is in difficulty. He spurns the help offered by the American and slips into the canyon below. The sixth is the Swiss guide, faithful, dependable, cautious and deeply conscious about his work as an Alpine guide. The White Tower is not conquered.

The contrast between a Christian novel and one that is not is sharp indeed. The one is controlled by a Christian philosophy that recognizes sin as sin and one feels entirely justified in condemning it. There is no relativism here. In *The White Tower* sin is not sin. It is condoned and even made to look as rather justifiable under the circumstances. In the one you are prepared to look for repentance and a new beginning upward, and in a few pages it actually comes before him. In the second type of novel one is prepared for a scene of immorality and in a few pages it appears in unnecessary detail and unashamed. The one moves you with an emotional resolution to strive for the better way of life. The other leaves you flat with no new impetus except to condone sin as it comes one's way. In the one God is the great determinator and judge. In the other no one determines and no one judges. In the one a person bids his heroes and heroines godspeed as they move onward bidding us farewell. In the other, the hero rides out into the night into an airplane. He knows not whither. The one leaves you looking to the heavens for the light that quickens. The other leaves you looking into the dark Swiss valley, where men are the toys, even of the mountains.

H. S.

IOWA PIONEERS

ROOFS OVER STRAWTOWN. By Sara Gosselink. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1945.

REFRESHINGLY stimulating amid the great number of modern novels because of its God-emphasis rather than man-emphasis, this historical novel, *Roofs Over Strawtown*, by Sara Gosselink, is a literary achievement among Calvinistic writers of fiction. The book breathes a wholesome spirit of godly Dutch heritage—a heritage brought to America by a group of liberty-loving Christians, led by Dominie Kempers, who crossed the waters to be able to live religiously, po-

litically, and economically according to their interpretation of God's Word. In it Miss Gosselink moves through a vast territory of historical data and human understanding with precision and deftness, symbolizing the Dutch mind in her carefully drawn characters.

The background for the first part of the book is laid in the Netherlands during the middle of the nineteenth century—a time when strife and persecution rifted the church in Holland. Leaders such as Dominie Kempers and Isaac Vander Molen were thrown into prison for voicing their beliefs and meeting in groups to worship as they sincerely believed right. To end persecutions for them and to solve the problem of serving God without State-dictation, this group of men and women, suffering hardships on the way, journeyed to America, settled in Pella, Iowa, and, there rededicated themselves to the high purpose of God-calling and God-living.

Here in the bleak, scantily populated state of Iowa is the setting for the second part of the book. This is an account of daily adjustments of raw-boned Dutchmen in a new land where courage and industry were the necessary prerequisites for living.

The story of Jannes and Gerhardt Vander Molen—their faithful and unselfish love for each other, their family, and their neighbors, with sincerity of purpose to glorify God—unifies and enhances the plot with the implicit beauty of steadfastness. Today amid the looseness and flippancy of moral living, it is reassuring to read a book in which God's precept of marriage and family life are not sneered at or made light of, and at the same time a book which is not unnaturally prudish.

Although there are weaknesses in the book, such as the triteness of the prologue, the occasional discrepancies in time sequence, the use of stilted and strained language in places, and errors in mechanics and diction, on the whole the book is a moving drama of historical life and facts, and commands the reader's attention. The artistic pen-and-ink etchings done by Reynold Weidenaar enhance the visual beauty of the book. The book is a successful piece of writing, reflecting the mores and creeds of the Dutch people brought from the Old Country into a new land, and the impact of a new land upon them.

GRACE H. BRUINSMA.

ON JOHN'S GOSPEL

DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN, by J. C. Macaulay. Price \$2.50. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.

THIS volume furnishes delightful reading. We like it. The pastor of the Wheaton Bible Church has rare ability as a writer. Seldom have we seen a popular, devotional commentary that is so readable. The author also has the gift of penetrating to the very heart of the subject. Here is a combination of exegesis, meditation, and sermon-building which is seldom seen. I like the way in which the author distributes his material under a central theme. One may differ with him at times, e.g., with respect to the meaning of John 1:5; see the Expositor's Greek Testament on this verse; or when one discerns traces of unwarranted spiritualizing, pp. 38, 46; or when one reads that "Jesus never relaxed his gracious efforts to save Judas", p. 177;—nevertheless, one is filled with genuine admiration for this splendid volume. The manner in which appropriate poetry is interspersed with the exposition is also deserving of our commendation. Truly, this is a book which every discerning reader will enjoy. We heartily congratulate publisher and author.

WILLIAM HENDRIKSEN.